

Washington, D.C. – Today, Congressman Sestak voted in support of the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2007 (HR 2830). The bill provides resources, builds capacity and takes care of Coast Guard Personnel; strengthens port security, immigration enforcement and drug interdiction and reorganizes the Coast Guard to meet its multi-mission responsibilities among other provisions. The bill passed 395-7. — “The Coast Guard Authorization Act bolsters our nation’s defense security, as it enhances the number of Coast Guard personnel, increases port security, and strengthens immigration enforcement,” said Congressman Sestak. “National security begins at home, and this legislation ensures that the Coast Guard has the right resources necessary to protecting Americas waters and borders.”

In specific, the legislation:

Provides Resources, Builds Capacity, and Takes Care of Coast Guard Personnel:

- Increases authorized end-strength by 1,500 members to 47,000 and increases funding to the Coast Guard to \$8.4 billion (\$200 million over the President’s budget) to ensure that the Coast Guard can successfully execute all its missions.
- Authorizes additional maritime security response teams and canine detection teams to detect explosives, interdict drugs and smuggled persons and authorizes the Waterway Watch Program, a program for boaters to notify the CG of suspicious activity.
- Grants access to the Armed Forces Retirement Home system to Coast Guard veterans and allows reimbursement of medical-related travel for members assigned to remote locations.

Strengthens Port Security, Immigration Enforcement and Drug Interdiction

- Requires the Coast Guard to protect and enforce security zones around all existing Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) facilities and, for each new LNG facility and requires a certification that the Coast Guard has the resources to protect the facility before such its security plan is approved. Allows State and local entities to assist Coast Guard in protecting the security zones around LNG facilities.
- Requires DHS to analyze the threat, vulnerability and consequences of a terrorist attack on gasoline and chemical cargo shipments and report the findings to Congress.

- Requires cruise ship owners and operators to notify DHS of security incidents involving a U.S. person that include death, serious bodily injury, and sexual assault on a cruise ship.
- Authorizes a biometric program in the Caribbean that has been linked to a significant drop in the number of illegal migrants trying to reach the United States by boat.

Reorganizes the Coast Guard to Meet its Multi-Mission Responsibilities:

- Strengthens the Coast Guard's marine safety capabilities by establishing an Assistant Commandant for Marine Safety, and builds capacity throughout the sectors by establishing Sector Marine Safety leadership and qualifications for training and experience for all marine safety personnel.
- Strengthens the Coast Guard's port security capabilities by establishing an Assistant Commandant for Port and Waterways Security to be responsible for all regulations and policies regarding security in our nation's ports and waterways.
- Moves the appeals process for suspensions or revocations of a mariner's license (e.g., a Captain's license) from a Coast Guard Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) to a National Transportation Safety Board ALJ where similar appeals of FAA decisions to suspend or revoke an airline pilot's license are handled. Appeals related to Transportation Worker Identification Cards (TWIC) would remain with the Coast Guard.

Enhances Accountability for the Deepwater Program:

- Addresses the contract management problems with this much-delayed program, a \$24 billion, 25-year procurement to modernize the Coast Guard's ships and aircraft.
- Eliminates the use of Lead System Integrators beginning on October 1, 2011 or earlier if the Secretary of Homeland Security can certify that the Coast Guard has the capacity to assume the role sooner.
- Requires the appointment of a qualified civilian as Chief Acquisitions Officer reporting directly to the Coast Guard Commandant.

Enhances Fishing Vessel Safety and Environmental Protection:

- Enhances requirements for safety equipment to be carried on commercial fishing vessels and requires training for vessel operators; commercial fishing is the most dangerous job in the

United States and has a high rate of injuries and deaths.

- Limits emissions from ships of sulfur oxide and nitrogen oxide (which are ozone depleting substances), mandates the use of cleaner engines and fuel to meet EPA standards, and institutes changes needed to bring the U.S. into compliance with international maritime pollution convention.
- Requires that U.S. vessels carrying more than 600 cubic meters of oil have double hulls around their fuel tanks to prevent the disastrous consequences of accidents such as the one that occurred last November when the COSCO BUSAN released 53,000 gallons of heavy fuel oil into San Francisco Bay following its collision with the Bay Bridge.
- Requires ships to begin installing ballast water treatment systems in 2008 to control the introduction of invasive species into U.S. ports and waterways and adopts international standard for ballast water for the period 2008-12 but requires the standard to be at least 100 times higher than the international standard in 2012.

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the U.S. Congress.